

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BRIDGETOWN 2283

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SUBJECT: CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA

REFS: A) STATE 295496 (B) BRIDGETOWN 2135 (NOTAL)

C) BTN 2190 (NOTAL) (D) BTN 2248 (NOTAL)

E) BTN 2269 (NOTAL) (F) BTN 2270 (NOTAL)

1. IN COMPLIANCE WITH REFTEL (A), TRANSMITTED HEREWITH ARE
TEXTS OF EDITORIALS WHICH APPEARED IN BARBADOS ADVOCATE-NEWS
ON DECEMBER 19 AND DECEMBER 21, RESPECTIVELY
ALSO TRANSMITTED IS TEXT OF ARTICLE BY WELL-KNOWN
BARBadian COLUMNIST, E.L. C. (JIMMY) COZIER;

QUOTE DEC 19

THAT PROTEST TO THE CUBANS

"BARBADOS HAS FOUND ITSELF CAUGHT UP IN THE
INTRIGUE THAT IS TODAY A FAMILIAR PART OF INTERNATIONAL
POLITICS, WITH THE REVELATION THAT CUBA HAS BEEN USING OUR
COUNTRY AS A TRANSIT POINT TO FERRY ITS TROOPS TO ANGOLA
WHERE RIVAL FACTIONS ARE IN A BLOODY STRUGGLE FOR POWER. FROM
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EARLY WHEN OUR COUNTRY WAS CALLED UPON TO IDENTIFY ITS FOREIGN

POLICY THE GOVERNMENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT BARBADOS WOULD BE "FRIENDS OF ALL AND SATELLITES OF NONE." THE IMPLICATION HERE WAS THAT WE WOULD TRY TO AVOID TAKING SIDES AS SUCH, BUT WOULD BE OBJECTIVE AS POSSIBLE IN REACTING TO THE ISSUES THAT WOULD ENGAGE OUR ATTENTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

THE FIGHTING IN ANGOLA INVOLVES A BIG POWER PLAY WITH THE SOVIET UNION SUPPLYING ARMS TO ONE SIDE AND THE UNITED STATES PROVIDING, LESS DIRECTLY, THE SAME TYPE OF SUPPORT FOR THE OTHER SIDE. CUBA IS CAUGHT UP IN THE FIGHTING BY PROVIDING MANPOWER SKILLED IN THE USE OF RUSSIAN-MADE ARMS, ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGOLA POPULAR LIBERATION MOVEMENT (MPLA). THE UNITED STATES IS SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL UNION FOR THE TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA (UNITA); AND THE FRONT FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (FNLA).

IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE INTERVENTION OF THE CUBANS HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE SOMEWHAT IN SLOWING DOWN THE ADVANCE OF THE UNITA-FNLA TROOPS. BUT THE BIG FEAR IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES IS THAT THE SITUATION IS SHAPING UP TO BECOME A VIETNAM STYLE WAR IN AFRICA. AS MATTERS STAND THE UNITA-FNLA TROOPS ARE IN POSSESSION OF A LARGER LAND MASS THAN THE MPLA BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE MPLA IS NOT PREPARED TO CONTINUE FIGHTING, WITH WHATEVER HELP IT CAN GET, TO TRY AND TAKE OVER MORE OF THE COUNTRY.

BUT WHATEVER MIGHT BE THE STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE COUNTRIES IN THE CONFLICT BARBADOS CANNOT AFFORD TO BECOME PART, EVEN INDIRECTLY, OF THIS ANGOLA FIGHTING. AND ALTHOUGH WE HAVE PROTESTED TO THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY THEY HAVE TAKEN TO USE OUR FACILITIES TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO PUSH THEIR MEN INTO ANGOLA TO FIGHT THERE, NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSING POSITION IN WHICH THE CUBANS HAVE PLACED US.

IN FACT, SO EMBARRASSING IS THE WHOLE BUSINESS THAT THOSE WHO FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER NEVER FAVOURED THE MOVE TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH CUBA MIGHT WELL FEEL THAT ALL ALONG THEIR SUSPICIONS OF CUBA'S INTENTIONS WERE JUSTIFIED. BUT EVEN IN ACCEPTING THAT WE HAVE BEEN USED, IT IS STILL FRIGHTENING THAT THIS

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COULD HAVE BEEN DONE AND NOTHING WAS KNOWN ABOUT IT. IT MIGHT BE THAT WE HAVE TOO TRUSTING A NATURE OR HAVE BECOME SO TOURIST-ORIENTATED THAT WE ARE NOT OVER CONCERNED ABOUT LANDINGS AND FLIGHTS FROM SEAWELL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO ADMIT THAT WE KNEW AND ARE ONLY NOW KICKING UP A FUSS BECAUSE THE CUBANS AND OURSELVES HAVE BEEN CAUGHT OUT BY OTHER SOURCES. THIS DOES NOT REDOUND TO

OUR CREDIT AND HOWEVER WE LOOK AT IT THE IMPRESSION THAT
EMERGES IS FAR FROM ENCOURAGING.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER, AND EVEN A CREDIT TO OUR SECURITY,
IF WE WERE IN A POSITION TO CLAIM BEFORE THE STORY BROKE ELSEWHERE
THAT WE HAD, ON OUR OWN INITIATIVE, DISCOVERED WHAT THE CUBANS
HAD BEEN UP TO AND HAD LAUNCHED THE NECESSARY PROTEST, STOPPING
THEM IN THE MEANTIME FROM FERRYING THEIR WAR-HUNGRY MEN THROUGH
OUR COUNTRY. INSTEAD IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CUBANS HAVE BEEN
TAKING US FOR A RIDE FOR SOME TIME, IF THE FIGURE OF NEARLY
3,000 CUBANS FIGHTING IN ANGOLA IS AN ACCURATE ONE. WE CAN
WELL IMAGINE HOW MANY HAVE BEEN THE FLIGHTS, "FROM TIME TO
TIME" THROUGH SEAWELL FOR THE PURPOSE OF MOVING THESE MEN TO
ANGOLA.

FURTHERMORE, IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW
THIS DEVELOPMENT AFFECTS OUR PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING GREATER
CONTACT WITH THE CUBANS IN HAVANA. IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT
WE SHOULD TREAT THE WHOLE BUSINESS AS IF THE CUBANS HAVE JUST
BEEN PULLING A FAST ONE. WE ARE EITHER SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT
THEY HAVE BEEN DOING AND REACT TO SUIT, OR WE CAN JUST GO
THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF SENDING OFF A "STRONG PROTEST, AND THEN
CONTINUE AS IF NOTHING HAS HAPPENED. TO BE DECEIVED BY A "FRIEND"
IS A MOST CRUEL FORM OF DECEPTION.

IT MIGHT BE ARGUED THAT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THE CUBAN BUSINESS
TOO SERIOUSLY SINCE THE RUSSIANS AND THE AMERICANS STILL FIND
IT POSSIBLE TO BE AMICABLE IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE TWO
OF THEM ARE MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THE ANGOLANS TO BE EACH
OTHERS THROATS. BUT EACH COULD CLAIM THAT ANY SUPPORT GIVEN
IS A MEANS TO AN END SINCE THE AMERICANS DO NOT WANT THE RUSSIANS
TO HAVE ANGOLA AS A SITE FOR A NAVAL BASE THAT WOULD BE
STRATEGICALLY PLACED, AND THE RUSSIANS ARE DETERMINED TO HAVE
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SUCH A BASE, REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY ANGOLANS ARE SACRIFICED IN
THE PROCESS.

IT IS ALL RIGHT TO LET THE SARDINES FIGHT ONCE THE BIG FISH
MANAGE TO GET WHAT THEY WANT IN THE LONG RUN WITHOUT SPILLING
THEIR OWN BLOOD. BUT WE IN BARBADOS HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN
FROM THE WAR IN ANGOLA AND THEREFORE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE USED."
UNQUOTE.

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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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QUOTE DEC 21

CONCERN MILDER THAN PPROTEST

THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT SHOULD TAKE PAINS
TO POINT OUT THAT IT COMMUNICATED WITH BARBADOS AT THE LEVEL
OF EXPRESSING "CONCERN" RATHER THAN THAT OF "PROTEST" OVER
CUBAN TROOP FLIGHTS TO ANGOLA THROUGH BARBADOS, PRESENTS
AN INTERESTING PICTURE. THE LEVEL OF "CONCERN" IS MILD
THAN THAT OF "PROTEST" AND COMES AT A TIME WHEN
UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT THROUGH FINANCE AND ARMS SUPPLIES
TO TWO OF THE ANGOLAN FACTIONS IS THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE BY
THE SENATE.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THE UNITED STATES COULD HARDLY HAVE VOICED
"A PROTEST" OVER THE USE OF SEAWELL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BY
THE CUBANS FOR REFUELING STOPS IN FERRING THOUSANDS OF ITS
TROOPS TO ANGOLA, TO FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE POPULAR LIBERATION
MOVEMENT (MPLA).

A NUMBER OF US SENATORS ARE BECOMING WORRIED THAT THE UNITED
STATES MIGHT FIND ITSELF INVOLVED IN ANGOLA JUST AS IT DID
IN VIETNAM. THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE IS SOMETHING THAT THE
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UNITED STATES IS TRYING HARD TO FORGET, AND ONCE THOUGHTS OF

VIETNAM ARE LINKED WITH US SUPPORT IN ANGOLA AN UNEASINESS WILL SURFACE THAT COULD MEAN THE UNITED STATES COMMITMENT OF PROVIDING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ARMS AID TO THE ANTI-MPLA FORCES MIGHT HAVE TO BE ABANDONED.

ADDED TO THIS, THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS PROVIDING AN ESTIMATED US\$50 MILLION (BDS\$100 MILLION) IN ARMS WAS AS MUCH A SURPRISE TO US CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS AS THE NEWS OF THE CUBAN TROOPS MOVEMENTS THROUGH BARBADOS WAS TO MOST OF ITS CITIZENS.

SO FAR THE FORD ADMINISTRATION IS CONVINCED THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO PREVENT A SOVIET BACKED MPLA FROM ACHIEVING VICTORY IN ANGOLA. THE REASON HAS LESS TO DO WITH ANY CONCERN OVER WHO GOVERNS THE ANGOLANS AND IS MORE RELATED TO US ANXIETY OVER THE SOVIET UNION ESTABLISHING A BASE IN ANGOLA TO CONTROL THE SEA LANES AROUND THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, IN SOUTH AFRICA. THESE SEA LANES ARE IMPORTANT IN THE SHIPMENT OF OIL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST NOT ONLY TO THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO TO EUROPE.

IT IS EASILY TO SEE WHY THE SOVIET THREAT THROUGH ANGOLA ARISES. SO STRONG IS FEELING ON THE MATTER AMONG THE FORD ADMINISTRATION THAT MR. DANIEL MOYNIHAN, THE US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN., HAS WARNED THAT "THE WORLD WILL BE DIFFERENT IN THE AFTERMATH IF THEY (THE COMMUNISTS) SUCCEED," IN TAKING OVER IN ANGOLA.

OF COURSE IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT MR. MOYNIHAN'S SENTIMENTS HAVE A FAMILIAR RING. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT AT ONE TIME IT WAS FELT THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD TO BE STOPPED IN VIETNAM AT ALL COSTS OR THEY WOULD BE A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY, NOT ONLY IN THE FAR EAST BUT EVEN IN THE REST OF THE WORLD. TODAY THAT FEAR HAS BEEN ALLAYED SOMEWHAT. EVEN IF IT IS THERE WE SENSE THAT THE SHAME ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES ON HOW THINGS EVENTUALLY DID TURN OUT IN VIETNAM IS GREATER THAN ANY FEAT THERE MIGHT BE OF COMMUNIST AMBITIONS IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD.

BUT THE EXTENT OF RUSSIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA, ALONG WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT OF THE CUBANS, DOES GIVE SOME INDICATION OF HOW IMPORTANT THE ANGOLA SCENE IS TO THE COMMUNISTS. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT CASTRO WOULD HAVE BEEN PERSUADED TO SPILL CUBAN BLOOD IN ANGOLA FOR THE MERE SAKE OF IDEOLOGY. AS WE SAY SO COLOURFULLY, THERE IS MORE IN THE MORTAR (NO PUN INTENDED) THAN THE PESTLE, IN THIS CASE.

WITH SO MUCH TALK ABOUT DETENTE IT WILL NOT DO FOR THE RUSSIANS

TO SEND THEIR MANPOWER TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE MPLA ANGOLANS.
THE CUBANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE NO REPUTATION TO LOSE.
THEY ARE KNOWN FROM LONG AGO TO BE THE "EXPORTERS OF REVOLUTION"
TO OTHER LANDS, AND EVEN IF THEIR PRESENT INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA
DOES DESTROY ANY HOPE THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN OF FUTURE RA-
PPROCHMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES, AFTER THE YEARS OF TRADE
EMBARGO AND SO ON, WHAT THEIR FRIENDS THE RUSSIANS STAND TO
GAIN BY AN MPLA VICTORY FAR OUTWEIGH ANY BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED
FROM CLOSER CONTACTS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

FOR ALL WE KNOW THE CUBANS MIGHT BE FIGHTING IN ANGOLA IN THE
HOPE NOT ONLY OF BENEFITTING THE MPLA BUT OF DOING A SERVICE
FOR THE RUSSIANS WHO STOOD BY THEM WHEN THE GOING WAS A
LOT ROUGHER FOR CUBA THAN IT IS TODAY. AND SO AS THE SONG SAYS,
"THE BEAT GOES ON.... AND MEN GO MARCHING OFF TO WAR...." UNQUOTE

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UNCLAS SECTION 3 OF 3 BRIDGETOWN 2283

QUOTE DEC 21

MR BARROW AND THE CUBANA AFFAIR BY E.L.C.

NOBODY WISHES TO GET INTO A SLANGING MATCH WITH THE PRIME
MINISTER, LEAST OF ALL RESPECTFUL ME. HOWEVER, I CANNOT
ALLOW HIS PERFORMANCE ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN OF FRIDAY EVEN-
ING TO PASS WITHOUT COMMENT.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE RED-HERRING OF "FOREIGN OWNED PRESS" WAS AGAIN DRAGGED INTO THE ARGUMENT, THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT NO LOCALLY-OWNED NEWSPAPER WOULD PERMIT ITS SPACE TO BE USED BY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FOR THE OBSERVATIONS QUOTED ON FRIDAY'S FRONT PAGE.

THIS IS A NON SEQUITUR UNWORTHY OF A TRAINED LAWYER- EXCEPT, PERHAPS, THAT THERE ARE TRAINED LAWYERS WHO EMPLOY NON SEQUITURS TO BEFUDGLE THE OPPONENTS FOR WHOSE INTELLIGENCE THEY HAVE LITTLE RESPECT.

OBVIOUSLY IT DOES NOT FLOW THAT IF THE ADVOCATE NEWS WAS BARBadian OWNED, MR. ADAMS' COMMENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN SUPPRESSED. MR. ADAMS HIMSELF MIGHT BE THE BARBadian OWNER. OR THE BARBADOS UNCLASSIFIED

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LABOUR PARTY. OR ME. OR THE THOUSANDS OF BARBADIANS WHO SHARE MR. ADAMS' FORTUNATELY STILL EXPRESSABLE OPINIONS.

OF COURSE, IF THE GOVERNMENT OR CERTAIN OF ITS MORE ARDENT SUPPORTERS CONTROLLED THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER, SUCH SUPPRESSION WOULD BE EXPECTED. WE HAVE ONLY TO RECALL THE MOST RECENT EVIDENCE TO HAND: THE BANNING OF MR. ADAMS' INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF BARBADOS, AND THE PROSCRIPTION OF FATHER ANDREW HATCH FROM THE IDIOT BOX OWNED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS AND RUN FOR IT BY THE CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION.

CERTAINLY, IF CBC-TV WAS OWNED BY A FOREIGN ORGANISATION, IT WOULD NOT DARE TO CARRY MR. ADAMS OR FATHER HATCH OR THE DEAN OF ST. MICAELS CATHEDRAL EITHER- NOT EVEN IF THEY CONCEDED EQUAL TIME TO THE DEAN OF THE PEOPLE'S CATHEDRAL. TO DO SO THEY MIGHT FEEL, WOULD PLACE ITS LICENCE TO OPERATE IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY, A CONSUMMATION NOT LIKELY TO BE RISKED BY A FOREIGN INVESTOR.

FORTUNATELY, NEWSPAPERS DO NOT OPERATE UNDER SIMILAR CONDITIONS TO THE BROADCASTING MEDIA, AND DO NOT YET HAVE TO BE LOCALLY OWNED TO ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO GET ALL THE NEWS AND SAMPLE ALL OPINIONS. AND GOD FORBID THE DAY WHEN THERE ARE LICENSING LAWS FOR NEWSPAPERS, FOREIGN, LOCAL AND DIVINELY INSPIRED.

AS FOR THE SUBSTANCE OF MR. BARROW'S TELEVISED APOLOGIA, THE LOGIC IS EVEN MORE COMPLETELY LACKING. HE SUBMITS THAT WHILE IT IS UNDENIABLY TRUE TO SAY THAT CUBAN AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN LANDING AT SEAWELL TO REFUEL, HE HAS NO PROOF THAT THERE WERE MILITARY PERSONNEL AND/OR MILITARY EQUIPMENT ABOARD THESE CAREFULLY SEALED CONTAINERS.

IS THE PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS THEN LODGING A STRONG PROTEST THROUGH HIS MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TO A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT ON A BASIS OF PURE AND VAGUE SUSPICION? SURELY, THEN, THE CUBANS ARE ENTITLED BLANDLY TO REPLY: 'WHAT TROOP MOVEMENTS ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? NO, MR BARROW YOU REALLY CANNOT COME WITH THAT. IT IS ASKING TOO MUCH OF US.

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EITHER WE ACCEPT THAT THERE WERE TROOPS ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT, OR WE DONT, AND THE "STRONG PROTEST" INDICATES THAT WE HAVE SO ACCEPTED. TALK ABOUT PROOF CAN ONLY BE ANOTHER REDHERRING TO CONFUSE THE YAPPING PACK.

NOR HAS THE PRIME MINISTER OFFERED ANY EXCUSE FOR THE UNCONSCIOUSABLY LONG TIME IT TOOK HIS GOVERNMENT TO BE ALERTED TO THE STRANGE GOINGS ON AT SEAWELL. MR. ADAMS-AND ALL BARBADIANS-ARE ENTITLED TO BE PERTURBED. FOR AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER, THE MIAMI HERALD, AND PROBABLY A LOT OF OTHER US NEWSPAPERS (SINCE THE STORY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GOT FROM A NEWS AGENCY REPORT) TO REVEAL A SITUATION OF SUCH GRAVE IMPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF BARBADOS BEFORE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT COULD DO SO IS SURELY A SAD, SAD COMMENTARY UPON THOSE TO WHOM WE CONFIDENTLY ENTHRUST OUR DESTINIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER MAY WELL TAKE UMBRAGE AT THE CRITICISMS MADE BY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, BUT THAT IS WHAT AN OPPOSITION IS THERE FOR - TO CRITICISE. DOES ANYBODY THINK THAT, HAD THE ROLES BEEN REVERSED, MR BARROW, AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, WOULD HAVE KEPT QUIET IN THE FACE OF AN OPPORTUNITY HANDED HIM ON A PLATTER TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL?

TRUE, THE PRIME MINISTER COULD HAVE POINTED OUT THAT MR. ADAMS' CHARGE THAT CUBAN TROOPS COULD LAND AT SEAWELL WITHOUT LET OR HINDRANCE TO MARCH UPON BRIDGETOWN WAS AN UNNECESSARY OBSERVATION. IT WAS, IN FACT, AS MUCH A RED-HERRING AS THE CRACK ABOUT FOREIGN OWNED PRESS.

THE FACT IS THAT CUBAN TROOPS CAN LAND AT SEAWELL ANY TIME THEY LIKE, AND MARCH ON BRIDGETOWN WITH VERY LITTLE LET AND MERELY TOKEN HINDRANCE, IF ANY, WE ARE - AND WE NEED NOT BE ASHAMED TO FACE IT-A DEFENCELESS ISLAND.

FORTUNATELY, WE ARE ALSO A PEACEFUL ISLAND, OUT TO OFFEND NOBODY AND TO BE SCRUPULOUSLY FAIR TO ALL. OUR ACTIONS DO NOT INVITE INVASION, AND IT IS VERY, VERY DOUBTFUL THAT ANY NATION -CUBA OR ANBODY ELSE- WILL ASSAULT OUR MILITARILY VIRGIN SOIL.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THIS VERY VULNERABILITY, WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR REPUTATION FOR NON-INTERFERENCE, ADHERING STRICTLY TO SUCH PRINCIPLE, AS DECLARED IN SENATOR MOE'S BELATED COM-

MUNICATION TO THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR.

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THRITY-NINE FLIGHTS CAN TRANSPORT A LOT OF SOLDIERS, AND WE
SHOULD NOT WAIT UNTIL THE HORSES HAVE ESCAPED TO SHUT STABLE
DOORS. WE MUST KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE UPON THE ANIMALS, AND
SEE TO THE PADDOCK FENCES THE MOMENT WE FIND THEM GETTING
RESTIVE.

BARBADOS MUST NOT BE MADE A CAT'S PAW. NOT BY CUBA. NOT BY
THE UNITED STATES. NOT BY GUYANA. BOT BY ANBODY. UNQUOTE.

2. COMMENTS BY SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS BEING TRANSMITTED SEPARATE
CABLE.

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